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ABSTRACT

Civic engagement that is, community service, political activism, environmentalism, and other volunteer activities provide needed services to community residents and psychological, social, and intellectual benefits to participants. A small but growing body of research suggests the likelihood that active involvement leads to healthy, active citizens. This synthesis of civic programs for youths provides specific information on the role civic engagement plays in helping young people develop a broad array of strengths and capacities. It focuses on youth outcomes in four domains: (1) educational achievement and cognitive attainment; (2) health and safety; (3) social and emotional well-being; and (4) self-sufficiency. The synthesis asks: What do civic engagement programs look like? What resources do civic engagement programs provide for promoting youth development? What impacts do civic engagement programs have on youth outcomes? and What characteristics of the programs seem to constitute effective civic engagement? The programs in the synthesis have been evaluated. Studies that use an experimental design (n=3) to test the impact of programs are emphasized because only experimental studies can yield causal evidence about what works, or does not work, to promote desired youth outcomes. Few experimental studies exist; however, so rigorous quasi-experimental studies (n=3) and nonexperimental studies (n=1) are also included. Appendix A contains program and study descriptions and evaluation, while Appendix B contains other activities offered by civic engagement programs. Lists nine program references. (Contains 1 figure, 6 tables, and 30 references.) (BT)

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Erik Michelsen, Jonathan F. Zaff, Ph.D., and Elizabeth C. Hair, Ph.D.

Project Director: Kristin Anderson Moore, Ph.D.
Project Manager: Elizabeth C. Hair, Ph.D.

Child Trends

Washington, D.C.

May 2002

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: A SYNTHESIS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Civic engagement—that is, community service, political activism, environmentalism, and other volunteer activities—provides needed services to community residents and psychological, social, and intellectual benefits to participants. A small but growing body of research suggests that giving young people opportunities to become engaged in civic activities increases the likelihood that they will become healthy, active citizens. This synthesis of civic programs for youths provides specific information on the role that civic engagement plays in helping young people develop a broad array of strengths and capacities. It focuses on youth outcomes in four domains: educational achievement and cognitive attainment, health and safety, social and emotional well-being, and self-sufficiency.

Moreover, the synthesis seeks to address the following questions: What do civic engagement programs look like? What resources do civic engagement programs provide for promoting youth development? What impacts do civic engagement programs have on youth outcomes? What characteristics of the programs seem to constitute effective civic engagement?

All of the programs in this synthesis have been evaluated, but not all of them with the same scientific rigor. Studies that use an experimental design to test the impact of programs are emphasized because only experimental studies can yield causal evidence about what works or does not work to promote desired youth outcomes. Few such studies exist, however, so rigorous quasi-experimental and nonexperimental studies are also included. Although they provide valuable insights into effective program practices, the results of quasi- and nonexperimental studies can only be considered suggestive. Therefore, they are referred to as "best bets" for programs.

Experimental evaluations of the following programs are included:

- Across Ages
- Quantum Opportunities Program
- Teen Outreach

Quasi-experimental evaluations of the following programs are included:

- K-12 Service Learning in California
- Kids Voting USA
- Learn and Serve America

Non-experimental evaluations of the following programs are included:

- Appalachian Project
- Community-Based Planning Project
- Public Works Mapping Project

Part I. Characteristics of Civic Engagement Programs

The methods employed by civic engagement programs vary, but most programs have some approaches in common. For instance, all of them involve at least one group component that emphasizes the social nature of civic engagement activities, and most combine life skills or civics curricula with opportunities to become engaged. Few programs have civic engagement as their primary goal or activity.

Part II. Outcomes Positively Affected by Civic Engagement Programs

Experimental Studies

Combining engagement in civic activities with increased civic knowledge results in positive impacts on youths' attitudes toward others and the likelihood of their becoming involved in community service. Participants in Across Ages, which combines mentoring with a positive youth curriculum and visits to a nursing home, and the Quantum Opportunities Program, a community-based service learning program, were more likely than youths in control groups to volunteer for community service. In addition, participants in Across Ages had increased knowledge of and improved attitudes about older people. Participants in the Quantum Opportunities Program had more positive attitudes about the future and were less likely to become involved with the police than youth in the control group.

Combining a life skills curriculum and interactions with mentors has positive impacts on educational outcomes. Both Across Ages and Teen Outreach, which use mentors and life skills training, had positive impacts on school engagement and attendance.

Only one program with a civic engagement component measured outcomes in the health and safety domain. Across Ages, whose curriculum offers youths strategies for coping with situations in which they are offered drugs, positively affected participants' reactions to such situations.

Engaging youths in community service while tutoring and educating them about positive life skills can reduce teen pregnancy. The Quantum Opportunities Program and Teen Outreach, both of which combine education and life skills training with community service, lowered participants' pregnancy rate.

Quasi-Experimental and Nonexperimental Studies

Quasi- and nonexperimental evaluations of programs that combine classroom study and discussion with hands-on civic activities corroborated the findings of the experimental evaluations. Positive effects of the programs included improved educational competence, increased engagement with school, increased rates of civic participation, and lower rates of teen pregnancy. In addition, the quasi- and nonexperimental evaluations suggest that civic engagement programs result in a positive orientation

toward work and increased attention to news.

Civic engagement programs may have effects beyond participants, both in the community at large and in the social relations of participants. Kids Voting USA, aimed at increasing children's political knowledge, also appears to improve the political knowledge of their parents.

Part III. Program and Participant Characteristics Associated with Positive Outcomes

Although based on quasi-experimental analyses, research indicates that personal and environmental characteristics of participants, such as educational ability and socioeconomic status, may interact with program characteristics and render them more or less effective. Several studies showed that effects were stronger for some demographic subgroups than others. In the case of Kids Voting USA, children from economically disadvantaged families benefited more from the program than children from affluent families. In evaluations of community leadership programs, however, youths who were doing well in school fared better than those who were not doing well. Clearly, a "one size fits all" model of civic engagement is unlikely to yield positive results for all participants. An approach that takes into account the nuances of various population subgroups would be ideal; however, it is not yet clear what works best for whom.

Increasing participation opportunities may increase actual participation. Students in the experimental evaluations of the Quantum Opportunities Program and Across Ages and the quasi-experimental evaluations of Learn and Serve America and K-12 Service Learning in California showed a greater likelihood than nonparticipants of taking part in community service. A key component of each of these programs was making community service opportunities readily available to participants.

Increasing civic efficacy and knowledge may increase civic engagement. Findings from quasi-experimental and nonexperimental evaluations of Kids Voting USA and the Community-Based Planning Project, respectively, suggest that exposure to a rigorous civics curriculum, particularly one with exercises that mimic real-world experience, can increase students' interest in the news and the likelihood that they will participate in the community in the future.

Civic engagement programs targeted at community service and the acquisition of civic knowledge can be effective if paired with opportunities to engage in service. Of all the programs evaluated, whether experimentally or in correlational studies, those that appeared to have the greatest success were those that involved both a behavioral and a learning component. Providing a theoretical grounding for the political or community service activities that youths undertake seems to imbue their actions with greater meaning and produce better results.

Part IV. Unanswered Questions

Currently, much of the information available on programs that focus explicitly on improving civic engagement is correlational or retrospective—not experimental or longitudinal.[1] Although the body of research in this area is growing, rigorous longitudinal studies of community service and civic education programs are clearly needed, as are experimental evaluations of the impacts of programs. Experimental evaluations should examine not only impacts on youth outcomes in educational attainment and health and safety, but also the degree to which certain types or quantities of community service by young people translate into service in adulthood.

One component of designing effective civic engagement programs will involve tracking the antecedents of civic engagement, such as parental participation, peer involvement, and students' motivation, and examining the ways in which these interact with individual characteristics and citizenship opportunities to forge positive citizenship.

This synthesis identifies program practices that are associated with positive youth outcomes. To make confident and practical program suggestions for practitioners, however, experimental studies are needed. Moreover, few of the programs included have civic engagement as their primary focus. Research is also needed on programs of this kind.

[1] Longitudinal studies track changes in populations across time and allow one to make stronger inferences about the impacts of interventions than single session, cross-sectional evaluations.

INTRODUCTION

Community service and voting are broad areas in which young people volunteer to help the community (e.g., neighborhood cleanup and environmentalism), help other people in the community (e.g., assisting at a nursing home), or help improve the structure of society (e.g., voting) with little regard for remuneration. Not only do volunteer community service and voting improve society, but participating in such civic activities is related to a plethora of positive psychological, social, and health outcomes for young people (Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988; Moore & Allen, 1996; Scales & Blyth, 1997; Schumer, 1994; Kraft, 1996; Youniss, McLellan, Su, & Yates, 1999).[2]

Although helping in one's community and being involved in the political process are important for adolescents' development and the well-being of society, recent data show that fewer than 50 percent of young people are engaged in community service activities[3] and only 14 percent report being involved in political activism (Faison & Flanagan, 2001). Voting data further illustrate this civic malaise. Among youths born after 1975, 46 percent of eligible voters went to the polls in the 1996 presidential election, a figure that dropped to 38 percent in 2000. The rate decreases dramatically in nonpresidential election years, with 15 percent of eligible youths voting in 1998. In comparison, 51 percent of adults ages 45 to 54 voted in the 1998 election (US Census Bureau, 2000).

Although few have been evaluated, many programs have been implemented with the goal of engaging young people in civic activities. The programs follow a developmental framework in which youths' needs are met through family, peer, and community resources, resulting in positive outcomes. Specifically, civic involvement programs engage youths in their communities, provide them with tangible results of their engagement and with needed social support and interaction, and provide meaning in their lives by fostering a sense of being part of the community, a "civic identity". When society makes available to youths the resources and opportunities needed to become engaged in their communities, as well as the tools and resources needed to enter the political dialogue, it increases the likelihood that they will become engaged, active citizens.

This synthesis discusses why civic engagement is important and examines the impact of specific programs on developmental outcomes in the areas of educational achievement and cognitive attainment, health and safety, social and emotional well-being, and self-sufficiency. It concludes with the next steps for research in civic engagement.

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[2] It should be noted that most findings regarding the effects of civic activity are based on nonexperimental studies. Although many of these studies include important controls and tracked data longitudinally, more research is necessary before causal links can be made.

[3] The community service participation rate is the highest it has been in 30 years, but the number of individuals participating remains low relative to the potential number of participants (Faison & Flanagan, 2001).

The Importance of Civic Engagement in Youth Development

Research on youth development poses a series of specific practical questions: What do young people need? How can society meet those needs? What outcomes can society realistically expect to achieve? Civic-oriented programs are one means through which adults can provide resources to help meet the developmental needs of young people. Figure 1 presents a model of youth development; Table 1 shows how civic engagement programs can help meet developmental needs.

Civic engagement activities benefit youths primarily by addressing their need for information and for technical and academic knowledge; social support and interaction; and meaning in life (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2000; Weiler, LaGoy, Crane, & Rovner, 1998) (Figure 2). Civic engagement programs that focus on only one of these needs may not be effective. For instance, over two-thirds of youths are proficient in civic knowledge (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999) and say they want to volunteer in the future (Harris Interactive, 2001), but only 14 percent actually participate in political organizations or clubs, and fewer than 50 percent undertake community service (e.g., Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csap, & Sheblanova, 1998; Harris Interactive, 2001; National Association of Secretaries of State, 1998; National Center for Education Statistics, 1999; Zaff, Moore, Papillo, & Williams, 2001). As discussed later, research suggests that giving youths social support and helping them understand the importance of their participation are important factors in achieving positive outcomes.

Figure 1. Model of Youth Development

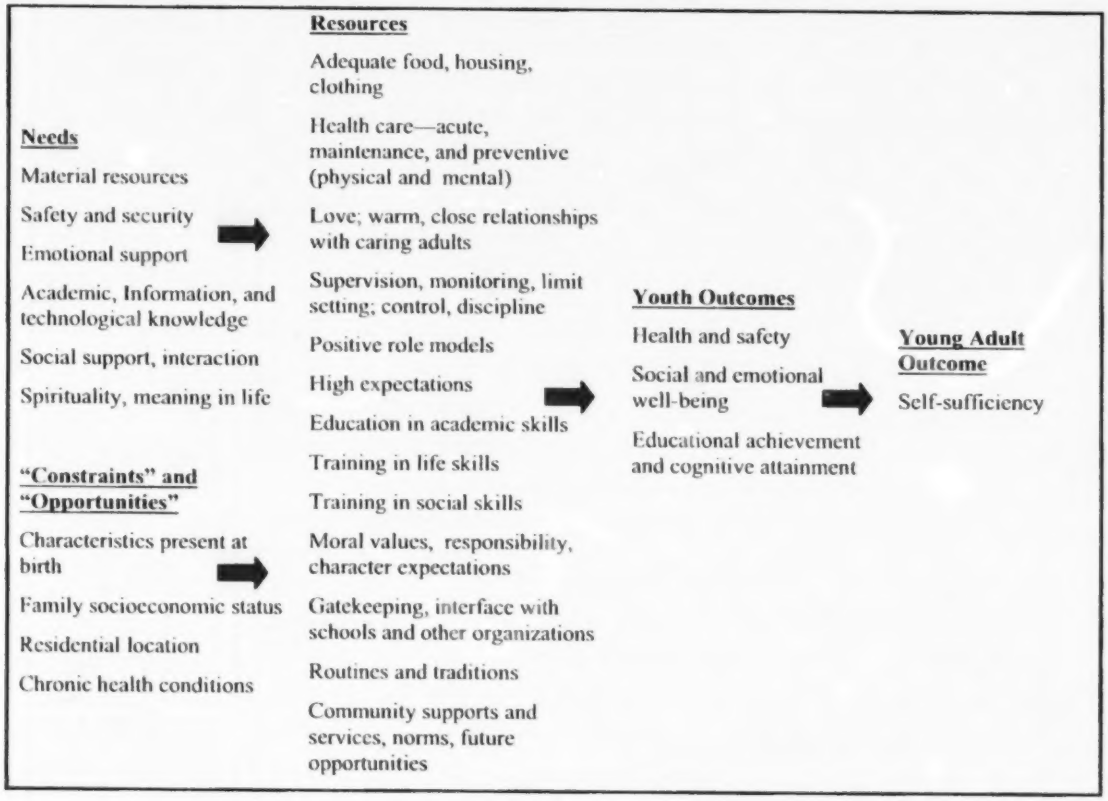

Table 1. Developmental Resources Provided by Civic Engagement Programs

Resource	Program Activity
Adequate food, housing, clothing	• N/A
Health care—acute, maintenance, and preventive (physical and mental)	• N/A
Love; warm, close relationships with caring adults	• Trust, open communication, warm relationships develop in some community service relationships and between some program staff or volunteers and program participants
Supervision, monitoring, limit setting; control, discipline	• Programs that include interacting with other adult volunteers or community leaders help provide role models for responsible citizenship and civic engagement
Positive role models	• Develop out of the volunteer-student relationship • Students interacting with community leaders are provided with models of successful professional practices • Recruiting older (55+) mentors and college student volunteers • In some programs, children take knowledge home to their parents, providing opportunities for them to serve as role models
High expectations	• Providing the expectation that children will perform community service and become responsible citizens
Education in academic skills	• Increasing political knowledge and exposure to civics education • Fostering discussion of important issues between children and adults, as well as encouraging debate
Training in life skills	• Life skills curriculum • Workshops on practical issues, such as substance abuse education
Training in social skills	• Classroom discussions on the development of social skills competency
Moral values, responsibility, character	• Youth-centered approach may also encourage good character • Community service requirement
Gatekeeping, interface with schools and other organizations	• Young people get to interact with local professionals or officials in local government, as well as with a variety of organizations serving the community
Routines and traditions	• N/A
Community supports and services, norms, future opportunities	• Community facilitators help increase public dialogue • Local organizations provide opportunities for volunteerism

Community Service and Volunteerism

Congress' National Educational Goals for 2000 set forth "involving America's children in community service activities" as an important objective in preparing students for responsible citizenship. In a society that considers service in the benefit of another a desirable trait, the good produced by community service (helping the poor, environmental cleanup, and so on) is an end in itself.

Research has found that service activities can exert positive academic, psychological, and occupational effects on those who undertake them as well as benefiting the community. For instance, community service activities can contribute to the psychological, social, and intellectual growth of participants (Conrad & Hedin, 1982). Short-term outcomes include improved grades and attendance at school, increased personal efficacy, recognition of the importance of participating in the political system, and socially responsible, community-oriented attitudes (Calabrese & Schumer, 1986; Giles & Eyler, 1994; Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988; Schumer, 1994). Long-term outcomes include increased likelihood of voting in adulthood, commitment to future service, decreased likelihood of dropping out of school, improved transition from school to work, and a strong intrinsic work motivation (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998; Kraft, 1996; Scales & Blyth, 1997). Volunteering is associated with higher rates of church attendance, voting, and taking part in other political acts, such as boycotting and demonstrating; it is associated with a decreased rate of marijuana use and teenage pregnancy (Moore & Allen, 1996; Youniss, McLellan, Su, & Yates, 1999).

Political Involvement

Democracy depends on citizen involvement. When individuals drop out of the democratic process, whether through apathy, lack of knowledge, or insufficient time, they sacrifice their chance to help shape the government and promote social change. While the effects of one's vote may not be as immediately tangible as volunteer work, there can be little doubt that the most responsive government is one that is closely monitored by active citizens. Conversely, active, involved citizens are less marginalized because elected officials must be aware of their needs if they want to be elected or reelected. With fewer than 40 percent of youths voting in national elections, there is, theoretically, a high likelihood that elected officials will not address issues important to young people.

For youths under the age of 18, voting is not an option. However, there are multiple ways in which they can be involved in the political process—on a global, national, or local level. School-based political clubs; local, state, and national political parties; and progressive political groups, among others, are ways of becoming engaged in the political process. Such involvement is associated with the acquisition and development of politically relevant knowledge, awareness, understanding, and skills (Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1999).

How successful are these programs at improving youth outcomes? This synthesis of program evaluations is designed to answer that question. The synthesis is organized into four parts: approaches taken by civic engagement programs; positive youth outcomes shown to be associated with participation in civic engagement programs; characteristics of programs and participants that contribute to effective civic engagement; and questions about the structure and content of civic engagement programs that need to be answered through future research.

Study Design

All of the programs in this synthesis have been evaluated. Studies that use a rigorous experimental methodology to test the impact of program participation on developmental outcomes receive the greatest emphasis because only such impact studies can provide causal evidence about what works and what does not. Unfortunately, few such studies exist. To shed light on program activities and practices that seem to be effective, and to suggest new approaches, the synthesis also includes nonexperimental and quasi-experimental studies. Results from these studies are incorporated as "best bets" for programs.

It is important to emphasize that programs which do not exhibit an effect on developmental outcomes or which have never been evaluated may in fact have positive impacts. Furthermore, it is possible that a given program or study has not been carried out appropriately[4]—implementation evaluations are rare.

Experimental evaluations were conducted on the following programs:[5]

- Across Ages (AA)
- Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP)
- Teen Outreach (TO)

Quasi-experimental evaluations were conducted on the following programs:

- K-12 Service Learning in California (K12)
- Kids Voting USA (KV)
- Learn and Serve America (LS)

Non-experimental evaluations were conducted on the following programs:

- Appalachian Project (AP)

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[4] Recent research has shown a lack of evidence for the utility of quasi-experimental designs over nonexperimental designs (Agodini & Dynarski, 2001; Hollister & Hill, 1995), although more research is needed before drawing definitive conclusions. Therefore, this report continues to differentiate between the two types of studies.

[5] Programs are noted with abbreviations of their name. Refer to Program References (at the end of the text) for complete references.

- Community-Based Planning Project (CB)
- Public Works Mapping Project (PW)

These programs and evaluations of them are described in detail in Appendix A.

PART I. CHARACTERISTICS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

This section describes programs that engage young people in civic activities as a means of promoting positive developmental outcomes. The characteristics of the programs are summarized in Table 2; the programs and studies of them are described in detail in Appendix A. Appendix B lists other activities offered by civic engagement programs.

What Goals Do the Programs Address?

Civic engagement programs intend to affect outcomes in the areas of academic achievement, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol use, youth violence, voting and political activism, and community service and volunteering. Their methods vary. Some programs include mentoring of youths by an adult, a civics curriculum, skills building, or any combination of these. All of the programs involve at least one group component, in which participants spend time with mentors, teachers, or parents in company with other students, and eight of the programs (Across Ages, Community-Based Planning Project, K-12 Service Learning in California, Kids Voting USA, Learn and Serve America, Public Works Mapping Project, Quantum Opportunities Program, and Teen Outreach) combine life skills or a civics curriculum with opportunities to become engaged in community life. In addition, the programs generally target the same age group of participants, use program leaders, and include social interaction.

Who Are the Program/Study Participants?

Most of the civic engagement programs reviewed here are targeted toward youths in middle school and high school. It is at around this age that young people begin to understand abstract concepts such as democracy and what it means to be a citizen (Piaget, 1981), as well as the broader impacts of their civic or social involvement. In addition, they begin to gain autonomy from their parents and often are encouraged to undertake community service and volunteer activities (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

Because many of the programs take place in a school setting, they use some combination of teachers and community volunteers to deliver the curriculum and lead volunteer activities. Several programs involve volunteers from the business community or local government to give the students and hands-on learning experiences.

What Activities Are Offered?

Depending on the nature of the program, participants develop relationships with adults, each other, or both. For instance, in the Kids Voting USA program, parents and teachers engage in activities with students at home and at school, respectively. So while students read the newspaper and watch the news with their parents at home, they might engage in mock voting exercises and history lessons with their teachers at school. Programs that focus on community service, such as K-12 Service Learning in California, generally pair an in-school civics curriculum with an after-school service experience. In Across Ages, adults act as mentors for youths.

Table 2. Summary of Study/Program Characteristics

		Program								
		AA	AP	CB	K12	KV[2]	LS	PW	QOP	TO
Study Design	Experimental	X							X	X
	Quasi-experimental				X	X	X			
	Correlational			X						
	Descriptive		X					X		
Goals	Safety and security	X							X	X
	Prevent substance abuse	X								
	Promote civic discourse		X		X	X	X			
	Provide mentoring opportunities			X	X			X		
	Provide community service opportunities			X	X		X	X	X	X
	Increase political knowledge					X		X		
Participants	At-risk	X				X				X
	Elementary (K – grade 6)				X	X		X		
	Middle School (grade 6 - 8)	X			X	X	X	X		
	High School (grade 9 – 12)			X	X	X	X		X	X
	Adults		X			X				
Activity Leaders, Tutors	Employees		X						X	
	Teachers	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
	Adult volunteers	X		X	X	X		X		X
Infrastructure	Providing community service opportunities	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
	Volunteer training		X		X					
	Support and supervision	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Type	Group	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	One-on-one	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Activities	Community service	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
	Discussion		X				X	X		X
	Class activities				X	X	X	X	X	X
	Life skills curriculum	X					X		X	
	Civics curriculum			X	X	X				
	Mentoring	X								X
Place	School	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
	Club									
	Home					X				
	Other	X	X		X			X	X	X
Time	During school day	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
	After school	X			X			X	X	X
	Other		X[1]			X[2]				
Frequency, Duration	Daily (sessions/week)						X[3]	1	5	1
	Monthly (sessions/month)					4[4]				
	Over the year (sessions/year)	10-12	3-4					1[5]	X[6]	X[7]
	School year curriculum	X		X	X			X		X

[1] Meetings were held in the evenings at various community sites.
[2] Children interact with their parents around civic issues at home.
[3] The frequency of participation varied from program to program, but most met at least once a week.
[4] The curriculum lasted for 6 weeks.
[5] One "issues assembly" is held each school year.
[6] Participants were in the program for 5 years.
[7] Participants volunteer at least 20 hours of work a year.

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PART II. OUTCOMES POSITIVELY AFFECTED BY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

This section describes the impact of civic engagement programs on outcomes in four areas of youth development: educational achievement and cognitive attainment, health and safety, social and emotional well-being, and, for young adults, self-sufficiency. Because some programs include activities such as parent workshops, life skills for students, or financial support for college, it is important to remember that other program activities or services besides civic and academic assistance and enrichment activities may have contributed to the outcomes documented.

Tables 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d summarize the findings of experimental and quasi-experimental studies of the programs in this synthesis. The programs covered in these tables are those for which rigorous evaluations or longitudinal data (with consideration for background characteristics) are available. Each table contains:

- "Youth outcomes"—specific outcomes that a civic engagement program seeks to achieve in each of the four areas of youth development.
- "Civic engagement programs work"—evidence from experimental studies that a particular program significantly affected a particular developmental outcome.
- "Civic engagement programs don't work"—evidence to date from experimental evaluations indicating that a particular program did not affect a particular developmental outcome. These findings should not be construed to mean that the program can never affect this outcome or that the program cannot be modified to affect the outcome.
- "Mixed reviews"—evidence from experimental evaluations that a particular program is effective in some, but not all, studies or that it is effective for some, but not all, groups of young people.
- "Best bets"—practices that have not been thoroughly tested but that may be important from a theoretical standpoint, based on quasi-experimental analyses, multivariate longitudinal studies, or wisdom from the field.

Although many studies measure outcomes in each domain, few studies measured every outcome. More research is needed to determine definitively whether civic engagement programs have a positive impact on the specific outcomes examined in this synthesis.

It is important to note the strength of experimental evaluations and the limitations of quasi-experimental and nonexperimental evaluations. In experimental studies, a group of young people selected at random to participate in a program is compared to a randomly selected group of peers who do not participate in the program (the control group). A randomly assigned program group is compared to a randomly assigned control group (i.e., non-program group). Because of random selection, each group has

an equal probability of containing participants with a diversity of individual characteristics and life experiences. This type of comparison allows researchers to draw a causal link between the program and desired outcomes.

Quasi-experimental and nonexperimental studies do not assign young people at random to program or control groups. Such studies do not enable researchers to draw definitive conclusions about causality, because the effects may be driven by individual or environmental characteristics that the researchers were unable to control either statistically or through the design of the study. Quasi- and nonexperimental designs are especially susceptible to self-selection biases—that is, young people who are socialized or predisposed to be involved in civic activities may choose to participate in civic engagement programs. Furthermore, recent studies of research designs suggest that quasi-experimental designs are no better than nonexperimental designs for the attribution of causality (Agodini & Dynarski, 2001; Hollister & Hill, 1995). This synthesis emphasizes the results of experimental studies and presents quasi- and nonexperimental findings as preliminary evidence of program effectiveness.

Educational Achievement and Cognitive Attainment

Community involvement programs appear to improve educational outcomes for participants. The effects often center around improving youths' engagement in school and increasing the likelihood that they will attend school regularly and not drop out.

Experimental Studies

Students participating in Teen Outreach were significantly less likely than students in the control group to fail in school or to be suspended from school. These effects were measured at the completion of the program. The Quantum Opportunities Program had several beneficial impacts. Participants had higher academic skills and educational expectations, and they received more honors and awards before graduating from high school, than nonparticipants. In addition, participants were less likely than students in the control group to drop out and more likely to graduate from high school and attend postsecondary school. These effects were still apparent after two years.

Across Ages increases engagement with school. Students who participated in the program that included mentoring had significantly higher school attendance rates than students in the control group or students in the program without mentoring. This impact was measured at the time the program ended; therefore, long-term effects are not yet known.

Quasi-Experimental Studies

K-12 Service Learning in California and Learn and Serve America participants showed improvement on achievement tests in language arts and reading, compared to youth in the control group. The programs also increased participants' engagement with school, their sense of educational competence, and homework completion. In addition, participants in the Learn and Serve America service learning program were more engaged with school and had higher math grades than youth in the control group.

Table 3a. Effects of Civic Engagement Programs on Educational Achievement and Cognitive Attainment*

YOUTH OUTCOMES	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS WORK	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS DON'T WORK	MIXED REVIEWS	"BEST BETS"
EDUCATION				
ACHIEVEMENT TESTS IN LANGUAGE ARTS AND READING (1 quasi-experimental study)				• Involvement in a program with a school-based curriculum on service learning may increase academic performance[K12]
ACHIEVEMENT IN MATH (1 quasi-experimental study)				• Participants in a service learning program had significantly better math grades than nonparticipants did[LS]
ACADEMIC SKILLS (1 experimental study)			• Participants in a community-based service learning program showed no difference in high school grades compared to youth in the control group, although academic skills increased significantly[QOP]	
SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT (1 experimental study; 2 quasi-experimental studies)	• Participants in a mentoring and community service learning program had higher rates of school attendance than youth in the control group[AA]			• Involvement in a program with a school-based service learning curriculum may increase engagement with school[K12] • Participants in a service learning program were significantly more engaged with school than nonparticipants[LS]
SENSE OF EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCE (1 quasi-experimental study)				• Involvement in a program with a school-based service learning curriculum may increase educational competence[K12]
HOMEWORK COMPLETION (1 quasi-experimental study)				• Involvement in a program with a school-based service learning curriculum may increase homework completion rates[K12]

* Program symbols:

AA	Across Ages	LS	Learn and Serve America
AP	Appalachian Project	PW	Public Works Mapping Project
CB	Community-Based Planning Project	QOP	Quantum Opportunities Program
K12	K-12 Service Learning in California	TO	Teen Outreach
KV	Kids Voting USA		

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YOUTH OUTCOMES	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS WORK	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS DON'T WORK	MIXED REVIEWS	"BEST BETS"
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS (1 experimental study; 1 quasi-experimental study)	• Participants in a community-based service learning program reported higher educational expectations than youth in the control group[QOP]			• Involvement in a program with a school-based service learning curriculum may increase educational aspirations[K12]
FAILURE IN SCHOOL (2 experimental studies)	• Participants in a national volunteer service program were less likely to fail in school than youth in the control group[TO] • Participants in a community-based service learning program were less likely than youth in the control group to drop out and more likely to graduate from high school[QOP]			
SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL (1 experimental study)	• Participants in a national volunteer service program were less likely to get suspended from school than youth in the control group[TO]			
ATTEND POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL (1 experimental study)	• Participants in a community-based service learning program were more likely to be attending a 2- or 4-year secondary school 1 year after the end of the program[QOP]			

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Health and Safety

There is a dearth of evaluations that measure health and safety outcomes.

Experimental Studies

Across Ages had an impact on youths' use of substances. Researchers found that, compared to youth in the control group, participants had significantly improved reactions to situations involving drug use.

Table 3b. Effects of Civic Engagement Programs on Health and Safety*

YOUTH OUTCOMES	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS WORK	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS DON'T WORK	MIXED REVIEWS	"BEST BETS"
HEALTH AND SAFETY				
USE OF DRUGS (1 experimental study)	• Participants in a mentoring and community service learning program showed improved reactions to situations involving drug use, compared to youth in the control group[AA]			

* **Program symbols:**

AA	Across Ages	LS	Learn and Serve America
AP	Appalachian Project	PW	Public Works Mapping Project
CB	Community-Based Planning Project	QOP	Quantum Opportunities Program
K12	K-12 Service Learning in California	TO	Teen Outreach
KV	Kids Voting USA		

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Social and Emotional Well-Being

Civic engagement programs targeted at community service and the acquisition of civic knowledge can increase positive attitudes toward others and, when paired with opportunities for civic experiences, increase subsequent civic behaviors.

Experimental Studies

Being involved in a combined program of mentoring and community service results in a greater likelihood of future community service. For instance, in Across Ages, participants who received the combined positive youth development curriculum and mentoring were significantly more likely to engage in community service than youth in the control group. Participants in the Quantum Opportunities Program were more likely than youth in the control group to volunteer and were less likely than youth in the control group to be involved with the police.

Quasi-Experimental and Nonexperimental Studies

People who participated in community-based programs in their youth are more likely to participate in similar programs as adults. Participants in programs such as the K-12 Service Learning in California and Community-Based Planning Project performed more community service or had more positive attitudes toward community service than youth in the control group. Correlational data from the Community-Based Planning Project reveal that individuals who participated in the program nearly 30 years earlier were four times more likely than nonparticipants to have joined informal volunteer groups since they graduated from high school. In addition, participants were twice as likely to have been officers in civic or service organizations. Participants in Learn and Serve America were 20 percent more likely than youth in the control group to be involved in community service when the program ended, but these effects dissipated rapidly. In a follow-up study a year later, only students who participated in the program in high school showed even a marginally significant increase in service participation over nonparticipants.

Programs focused on increasing political knowledge may affect persons beyond the participants. Kids Voting USA had the dual effect of improving participants' ability to work in groups and learn citizenship skills and their parents' civic involvement. The program involves not only classroom activities, but also assigning students projects on which to work with their families at home, thereby increasing attention to the news, especially in low-income families. This finding is based on nonexperimental data, however, and more research needs to be done before definitive conclusions can be drawn.

Table 3c. Effects of Civic Engagement Programs on Social and Emotional Well-Being*

YOUTH OUTCOMES	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS WORK	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS DON'T WORK	MIXED REVIEWS	"BEST BETS"
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL				
VOLUNTEERING (2 experimental study; 2 quasi-experimental studies; 1 nonexperimental study)	• Participants in the mentoring program of a community service learning program were significantly more likely than youth in the control group to participate in community service[AA] • Participants in a community-based service learning program had higher rates of volunteerism than youth in the control group[QOP]			• Participants in a community-based planning project were four times as likely as nonparticipants to have been involved in informal voluntary groups since high school[CB] • Being in a program with a school-based service learning curriculum in elementary school may increase voluntary community service[K12] • Participants in a service learning program were 20% more likely than nonparticipants to have been involved in community service in the last 6 months (at 1-year follow-up, high school students volunteered marginally significantly more hours to community service than nonparticipants)[LS]
COMMUNITY SERVICE LEADERSHIP (2 quasi-experimental studies; 1 nonexperimental study)				• Participants in a community-based planning project were twice as likely as nonparticipants to have been officers in civic or service groups since high school[CB] • Involvement in a program with a school-based service learning curriculum may increase community leadership[K12] • Participants in a service learning program showed significantly more service leadership than nonparticipants[LS]
ATTENTION TO THE NEWS (1 quasi-experimental study)				• Involvement in a civic education and activity program may increase students' newspaper reading, TV news viewing, attention to campaign news, and election knowledge[KV]

* **Program abbreviations:**

AA	Across Ages	LS	Learn and Serve America
AP	Appalachian Project	PW	Public Works Mapping Project
CB	Community-Based Planning Project	QOP	Quantum Opportunities Program
K12	K-12 Service Learning in California	TO	Teen Outreach
KV	Kids Voting USA		

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YOUTH OUTCOMES	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS WORK	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS DON'T WORK	MIXED REVIEWS	"BEST BETS"
CIVICS KNOWLEDGE (1 experimental study; 1 nonexperimental study)	• Participants in a mentoring and community service learning program had increased knowledge about older people, compared to youth in the control group[AA]			• Participants in a school-based civic engagement program had increased political and civics knowledge, compared to nonparticipants[PW]
POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHERS (2 experimental studies; 2 quasi-experimental studies; 1 nonexperimental study)	• Participants in the mentoring program of a community service learning program had increased positive attitudes toward the future, and older people[AA] • Participants in a community-based service learning program had higher rates of positive attitudes toward the future than youth in the control group[QOP]			• Participants in a school-based civic engagement program had improved attitudes toward working with others[PW] • Participants in community forums were able to facilitate discussions on issues of local civic and political importance[AP] • Participants in a service learning program were significantly more accepting of cultural diversity than nonparticipants[LS]
DELINQUENT BEHAVIORS (1 experimental study; 1 quasi-experimental study)	• Participants in a community-based service learning program were less likely than youth in the control group to become involved with police[QOP]			• Middle school participants in a service learning program were less likely to be arrested than nonparticipants[LS]

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Self-Sufficiency

Research from both experimentally and quasi-experimentally evaluated civic engagement programs suggests that they can affect certain self-sufficiency outcomes in adolescents, particularly childbearing.

Experimental Studies

Programs that combine a school-based life skills curriculum with a community service component, as well as a combined community service and mentoring program, resulted in lower rates of teen pregnancy. Students participating in Teen Outreach were significantly less likely than their peers in the control group to become pregnant during the year they were in the program. Quantum Opportunities Program participants had fewer children than youth in the control group at the one-year follow-up. Impacts were particularly strong in one of the four sites.

Quasi-Experimental Studies

Participating in a service learning program is related to lower rates of teen pregnancy and more positive attitudes toward work. Middle school students who participated in Learn and Serve America were less likely than nonparticipants to become pregnant or father a child. A study of the K-12 Service Learning Program in California suggested that high school participants in service learning hoped to complete more years of additional education than did nonparticipants.

Table 3d. Effects of Civic Engagement Programs on Self-Sufficiency*

YOUTH OUTCOMES	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS THAT WORK	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS DON'T WORK	MIXED REVIEWS	"BEST BETS"
SELF-SUFFICIENCY				
LIKELIHOOD OF TEEN PREGNANCY (2 experimental studies; 1 quasi-experimental study)	• Participants in a national volunteer service program were less likely to get pregnant than youth in the control group (3.2% vs. 5.4%)[TO] • Participants in a community-based service learning program had fewer children than youth in the control group at the 1-year follow-up[QOP]			• Middle school participants in a service learning program were less likely than nonparticipants to become pregnant or father a child[LS]
WORK ORIENTATION (1 quasi-experimental study)				• Involvement in a program with a school-based service learning curriculum may increase positive orientation toward future work[K12]

* Program symbols:

AA	Across Ages	LS	Learn and Serve America
AP	Appalachian Project	PW	Public Works Mapping Project
CB	Community-Based Planning Project	QOP	Quantum Opportunities Program
K12	K-12 Service Learning in California	TO	Teen Outreach
KV	Kids Voting USA		

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Summary of Civic Engagement Program Impacts

Experimental evaluations, corroborated by quasi- and nonexperimental evaluations, show that programs aimed at increasing civic engagement may have the following positive outcomes for young people:

- **Improved achievement on academic tests**
- **Lower dropout and suspension rates and improved engagement with school**
- **Less likelihood of alcohol consumption and improved reactions to situations involving drug use**
- **Improved attitudes toward older people**
- **Increased likelihood of performing community service activity**
- **Increased attention to the news**
- **Decreased likelihood of teen pregnancy and childbearing**

Quasi-experimental and nonexperimental evaluations suggest that civic engagement programs result in a positive orientation toward work and increased attention to the news.

It is important however, to note the following limitations of these findings:

- The findings from quasi-experimental or correlational studies do not establish causality; experimental research is necessary to confirm findings about attitudes toward work and attention to the news.
- Civic engagement programs span a wide range of aims and, accordingly, result in different outcomes. Consequently, researchers do not yet know whether a single program can affect multiple civic engagement constructs, such as voting, volunteering, and environmentalism, or whether multiple programs are needed to bring about multiple outcomes.
- Most of the programs studied had several components, one of which was civic engagement. It is impossible to tell whether civic engagement, other components, or a combination of components resulted in the positive outcomes.
-

PART III. PROGRAM AND PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Effective civic engagement practices are those that change developmental outcomes for young people. This section describes program and participant characteristics that are associated with positive outcomes. Because some of the data come from nonexperimental studies, causality cannot be established definitively; therefore, these program practices are described as "best bets" for changing outcomes (Table 4).

The following are lessons learned from the programs evaluated, as well as from a larger body of research:

- **Increasing civic efficacy and civic knowledge may increase civic engagement.** Research suggests that the most effective way to increase students' participation in the political process (voting, donating money, or being involved in political campaigns) is to increase their sense of political efficacy (Niemi & Chapman, 1998). Students who think their actions or their votes make a difference are more likely to participate.

  Although political knowledge is only one of many potential predictors of civic engagement, political knowledge allows a motivated youth to be engaged in an intelligent manner. Families that engage their children in discussions of controversial issues and encourage them to hold autonomous opinions tend to have youths with greater civic knowledge, interest, and exposure to political information (McLeod, 2000).

  Findings from quasi-experimental and nonexperimental evaluations of Kids Voting USA and the Community-Based Planning Project suggest that exposure to a rigorous civics curriculum, particularly one that involves exercises mimicking real-world experience, can increase students' interest in the news and their likelihood of participating in the community in the future.

- **Increasing opportunities for participation may increase actual participation.** Young people have reported that the most important factor in determining whether they participate in community service activities is whether their school arranges opportunities for such participation (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). This finding suggests that there is a need for civic engagement programs focused on volunteerism, whether based inside or outside of school, to make it easy for adolescents to get involved. Researchers have discovered some barriers to involvement in civic activities, however. For instance, low socioeconomic status (SES) can act as a barrier to volunteering because low SES participants generally have fewer readily available opportunities to be involved in volunteer activities (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998).

  Students in the experimental evaluations of the Quantum Opportunities Program and Across Ages and in the quasi-experimental evaluations of Learn and Serve

America and K-12 Service Learning in California were more likely than youth in the control group to engage in community service. A key component of each of these programs is making community service opportunities readily available to students in the program.

- **Being aware of individual differences may improve program effectiveness.** Some of the most interesting effects of civic engagement programs center on the differences among participants and the relationship of those differences to effectiveness. For instance, in the Kids Voting USA program, which was associated with improvements in students' attention to news, children in low SES families showed the greatest improvement. In addition, the student-parent discussion initiated by the curriculum improved the political knowledge of low SES parents more than that of higher SES parents. This suggests that many of the gaps in political knowledge that exist among individuals in different economic strata may result from differences in exposure to the political process (e.g., voting, political discussion) that can be at least partially addressed through programs such as Kids Voting USA.

  In a study of selected subgroups within the K-12 Service Learning in California program, researchers found that positive effects on community service leadership and voluntary service participation were greater for educationally sufficient youths than for educationally disadvantaged youths. The study looked at community service leadership in elementary schools and voluntary service participation in middle schools. Additional analyses, aimed at effects on community service leadership in middle schools by gender, found that male students showed greater positive effects than female students.

  Data from the evaluation of the Appalachian Project, aimed at improving the political discourse in rural Kentucky, revealed several interesting findings; among them, that practitioners attempting to facilitate small-scale, regional meetings should focus discussion primarily on issues of local interest, rather than broad sweeping discussions. In addition, efforts such as these should be careful to utilize spoken, rather than written, resources for deliberation, and should give considerable attention to the fact participants may not be literate.

- **Involving students in the development and implementation of a civic engagement program may increase participation and the success of the program.** By giving youths a voice in the activities in which they participate and the curriculum they adopt, their experience can be made more positive (Garvey, McIntyre-Craig, & Myers, 2000). Program directors can do this by allowing participants to assess their community's needs for programs, share program planning responsibilities, help with the program's budget, and emphasize the impacts of the program on the community and the participants (Garvey, McIntyre-Craig, & Myers, 2000).

Students in the nonexperimentally evaluated Public Works Mapping Project, which emphasized bringing students together with teachers and community leaders, reported learning about working as a group and about citizenship in the context of school, as well as learning how to apply theoretical work to practical matters.

- **Giving students time to reflect and time to see the effects of the program are both potentially important factors in success.** The presence of weekly seminars in civic engagement programs was found to be the strongest variable predicting civic engagement among students. The seminars gave participants time to reflect on their activity and to forge an explicit connection between their service and the learning (Conrad & Hedin, 1982; Katula, 2000). The length of the program and the number of service episodes (program intensiveness) are also associated with the effectiveness of civic engagement programs (Conrad & Hedin, 1982).

Table 4. "Best Bets" for Effective Civic Engagement Programs**

PROGRAM/PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS	"BEST BETS"	E	H	SE	SS	MIXED REVIEW/CAUTIONARY NOTES	E	H	SE	SS
COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES TIED IN TO A SCHOOL CURRICULUM (2 experimental studies; 2 quasi-experimental studies)	**Students at half the sites where data was collected had significant improvements in:** Achievement tests in language arts or reading[K12] Measures of engagement with school[K12] Sense of educational competence[K12] Homework completion[K12] Educational aspirations[K12]	X		X	X	**Students showed no improvement in social and civic attitudes on measures of:** Acceptance of cultural diversity[K12]			X	
	Students showed improvement in social and civic attitudes on measures of: Personal and social responsibility[K12] Work orientation[K12] Communication[K12] Voluntary service[K12] Community service leadership[K12]									
	Students who provided at least 20 hours of volunteer service per year (average 45.8 hours) had decreased rates of: Failure in school[TO] Suspensions from school[TO] Pregnancy[TO]	X			X					

** Youth outcome domains: EA Educational achievement; H Health and safety; SE Social and emotional well-being; SS Self-sufficiency

Program symbols: AA Across Ages; AP Appalachian Project; CB Community-Based Planning Project; K12 K-12 Service Learning in California; KV Kids Voting USA; LS Learn and Serve America; PW Public Works Mapping Project; QOP Quantum Opportunities Program; TO Teen Outreach

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PROGRAM/PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS	"BEST BETS"	E	H	SE	SS	MIXED REVIEW/CAUTIONARY NOTES	E	H	SE	SS
	Participants in a community-based service learning program reported: Higher educational expectations than youth in the control group[QOP] Less likelihood of dropping out and greater likelihood of graduating from high school than youth in the control group[QOP] Fewer children than youth in the control group at the 1-year follow-up[QOP] Less likelihood of becoming involved with police[QOP] Higher rates of positive attitudes toward the future than youth in the control group[QOP] Higher rates of volunteerism than youth in the control group[QOP] Greater likelihood of attending a 2- or 4-year secondary school 1 year after the end of the program[QOP]	X		X	X	**Participants in a community-based service learning program:** Showed no difference in high school grades, compared to youth in the control group, although participants' academic skills increased significantly[QOP]	X			
	Participants in a service learning program: Were significantly more engaged with school than nonparticipants[LS] Had significantly better math grades than nonparticipants[LS] Showed significantly more service leadership than nonparticipants[LS] Were less likely to be arrested than nonparticipants[LS] Were significantly more accepting of cultural diversity than nonparticipants[LS] Were less likely than nonparticipants to become pregnant or father a child[LS]	X		X	X	Were 20% more likely than nonparticipants to have been involved in community service in the last 6 months (at 1-year follow-up, high school students volunteered marginally significantly more hours to community service than nonparticipants)[LS]			X	
STUDENT CIVICS CURRICULUM PAIRED WITH PRACTICAL EXERCISES (1 quasi-experimental study; 1 nonexperimental study)	**Students who were exposed to the curriculum:** Showed substantially increased attention to news (and greater attention to newspaper than TV news)[KV] Increased student-parent discussion of news issues[KV] Low SES students benefited more than middle-class students[KV] Among low-SES students, parent-child discussion increased parental knowledge about election[KV]			X						
	Students who participated in a 4-year community-based planning project were: Four times as likely to be members of voluntary groups as adults[CB] Twice as likely to be officers in civic or service organizations as adults[CB]			X						

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PROGRAM/PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS	"BEST BETS"	E	H	SE	SS	MIXED REVIEW/CAUTIONARY NOTES	E	H	SE	SS
CIVIC EDUCATION PLUS INVOLVEMENT IN GROUP WORK (1 nonexperimental study)	**Students participating reported learning:** How to apply theoretical work to practical matters[PW] How to be good citizens in school, community, and home contexts[PW] How to work in groups and how to work as a group[PW]			X						
INTERGENERATIONAL MENTORING (1 experimental study)	**Students in the combined mentoring – problem-solving group showed:** Increased positive attitudes toward school, the future, and older people[AA] Increased knowledge about older people[AA] Improved reactions to situations involving drug use[AA] Higher rates of community service[AA]	X	X	X						
CIVIC LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM (1 nonexperimental study on adults)	Providing participants with the skills to write their own issue briefs is more effective[AP] Involving elected officials is important[AP] Neutral, well-trained discussion leaders facilitate smoother conversation[AP] Encouraging deliberation *and* community-initiated action is the most effective strategy for a successful program[AP]	X		X		Depending on issue booklets from a central source (e.g., a university) leads to feelings of disempowerment[AP]			X	

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Child Trends

PART IV. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

At present, much of the information available on programs that focus explicitly on civic engagement is not experimental. Although the body of research in this area is growing, there is clearly a need for more rigorous, longitudinal experimental evaluations of the effects of civic engagement programs on youth development. Moreover, these evaluations should examine not only effects in the education or health and safety domain, but also the degree to which certain types or quantities of civic engagement programs translate into positive outcomes in adulthood. Such research would provide a better understanding of the factors that spur young people to participate and the types of programs that are able to involve them in rewarding and fulfilling ways.

Specifically, research is needed to answer the following questions regarding civic engagement programs:

- Is civic engagement a single concept, or are there qualitatively different types of civic engagement activities that predict different outcomes?
- Do civic engagement programs per se have a positive effect on young people, or do well-organized programs in general have a positive effect?
- How long do the effects of civic engagement programs last?
- How much time must youths spend in community service activities in order for the service behavior (and other positive outcomes) to persist after the program and even into adulthood?
- Should specific programs be geared to specific subgroups based on individual differences? For example, are introverted youths likely to find a largely solitary activity less intimidating, and thus be more likely to stay engaged?

Appendix A: Program and Study Descriptions

Program: ACROSS AGES

Population Served:
Size: Varies – this is an ongoing program
Age: 6th graders
Other Characteristics: Mainly low-income families living in Philadelphia

Program Components:

Component	Provided by	Duration	Description
Mentoring	Older elderly mentor	1 school year	Formal and informal activities
Positive youth development curriculum		1 school year	Life skills curriculum
Community service learning		10-12 visits over year	Visit with elderly at nursing home

Program Objectives/Goals:
Safety and security: to prevent, delay, or curtail substance use among high-risk children

Study:
LoSciuto, L., Rajala, A., Townsend, T.N., & Taylor, A.S. (1996). An outcome evaluation of Across Ages: An intergenerational mentoring approach to drug prevention. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 11,* 116-129.

Study Objectives and Measurements:
Objective:
To evaluate the effectiveness of mentoring, teaching a life skills curriculum, and being exposed to community service learning in delaying, curtailing, or preventing substance use
Measurement instrument:
Examined program's effects on 11 youth development constructs, including social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral competencies, bonding, resiliency, self-efficacy, recognition for positive behavior, positive identity, opportunities for positive social involvement, and positive social norms

Evaluation:
Type: Experimental—2 experimental groups and 1 control group (Positive Youth Development Curriculum/community service/parent workshop; Positive Youth Development Curriculum/community service/parent workshop/mentoring; and youth in the control group. Randomized pretest and post-test).
Statistical techniques: ANCOVAs and ANOVA comparing two groups at a time. Significance level < .05.

Population evaluated: 562 children from mainly low-income families living in Philadelphia

Impacts:
Mentoring group had increased positive attitudes regarding school, the future, and older people; increased knowledge about older people; improved reactions to situations involving drug use; and higher rates of community service. Participation also significantly improved school attendance. The Positive Youth Development Curriculum/community service/parent workshop strategy improved participants' knowledge about older people. Mentor involvement was positively associated with improved attendance at school.

Other Information: None.

Program: COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING PROJECT

Population Served:
Size: Not provided
Age: High school seniors
Other Characteristics: Subjects were seniors in high school in northwestern Pennsylvania in 1945-1949

Program Components:

Component	Provided by	Duration	Description
Community-based planning project	Collected and analyzed data under teacher's supervision and in collaboration with town officials	1 school year	Students in civics class assisted local town government in planning for anticipated urban growth

Program Objectives/Goals:
To provide students with practical training and the opportunity to work with community leaders on a collaborative project.

Study:
Beane, J., Turner, J., Jones, D., & Lipka, R. (1981). Long-term effects of community service programs. *Curriculum Inquiry, 11,* 143-155.

Study Objectives and Measurements:
Objective:
To examine the effects of the project on participants in their adult lives.
Measurement instrument:
Study used a self-report questionnaire to collect data on adults' participation in voluntary groups

Evaluation:
Type: Correlational

Statistical techniques: Descriptive

Population evaluated: Seniors in high school in northwestern Pennsylvania in 1945-1949 who participated in the program vs. those who did not. A total of 82 students.

Outcomes:
Participants in the planning project were four times more likely than nonparticipants to have been members of informal voluntary groups over the past 30 years. Participants were also twice as likely as nonparticipants to have been officers in formal civic or service organizations over the past 30 years.

Other Information:
No control group.

Program: K-12 SERVICE LEARNING IN CALIFORNIA

Population Served:

Size: Approximately 40 service learning partnerships throughout California
Age: Grades 6 – 12
Other Characteristics: Rural, urban, and suburban neighborhoods; students in elementary, middle, and high school

Program Components:

Component	Provided by	Duration	Description
Students learn curriculum that ties school work with service in the community	School	Grades 6 – 12	Field work with teachers, principals, and volunteers in the community

Program Objectives/Goals:

Service learning engages students in community service linked to school curriculum as a strategy for improving learning, helping students become good citizens, and advancing their personal and social development. Service learning goals also include the promotion of school reform and the provision of needed services to communities.

Study:

Weiler, D., LaGoy, A., Crane, E., & Rovner, A. (1998). *An Evaluation of K-12 Service Learning in California: Phase II Final Report.* Emeryville, CA: Research, Policy, Practice International.

Study Objectives and Measurements:

Objective:

To document the potential of well-implemented service learning for enhancing student academic achievement and interest in school work and for strengthening students' sense of civic, social, and personal responsibility. To describe the impact of service learning on teachers and schools. To describe how well-implemented service learning affects community partners. To assess the relationship between service learning implementation and its impacts on students, teachers, schools, and communities.

Measurement instrument:

The study included pre– and post – achievement test measures, a survey of effects on student education, student and teacher self-reports on homework completion and school interest, a survey of student attitudes, measures of school attendance, and student and teacher self-reports on students' voluntary participation in community service.

Evaluation:

Type: Quasi-experimental

Statistical techniques: Multiple regressions

Population evaluated: The sample included 15 classroom sites in rural, urban, and suburban neighborhoods, covering students in elementary, middle, and high school at various locations in California. 775 students in the program vs. 310 comparisons.

Outcome:

Service learning was related to large gains in academic achievement in elementary and middle school participants, moderate gains in the educational aspirations of high school participants, and moderate gains in homework completion by elementary school participants. It increased voluntary service by elementary school participants, community service leadership in middle school participants, and personal and social responsibility as well as community service leadership in high school participants.

Other Information:

Program appeared to be negatively associated with middle school participants' engagement with school and communication.

Program: KIDS VOTING USA

Population Served:
Size: 457 student-parent pairs
Age: Students from 5th – 12th grade
Other Characteristics: Students in San Jose, California schools

Program Components:

Component	Provided by	Duration	Description
Students practiced skills of citizenship with the help of community volunteers	School	6 weeks	Learned how to register voters, held mock elections, and compiled information about electoral issues
Dissected political ads			
Analyzed political positions			
Participated in issue debates			
Held a convention and mock vote			

Program Objectives/Goals:
To provide students with political information, including instruction on how to register a person to vote, how to organize information for electoral decisions, how to find out the positions of different candidates on issues, why political parties are formed, and the history of the franchise in the United States.

Study:
McDevitt, M., & Chaffee, S. (2000). Closing gaps in political communication and knowledge: Effects of a school intervention. *Communication Research, 27,* 259-292.

Study Objectives and Measurements:
Objective:
To examine the implications of the program for children, as well as to see the effects of the program on their parents.
Measurement instrument:
In-person interviews and questionnaires were used before the election to test all questions. Data were collected after the election via phone interviews with students and parents regarding their political knowledge.

Evaluation:
Type: Quasi-experimental

Statistical techniques: Multiple regressions

Population evaluated: Students and their parents (some parent-child pairs participated in the program and some were assigned to the control group); 457 parent-children pairs

Outcome:
The curriculum was associated with significant increases in attention to news, particularly students' newspaper reading. Student-parent discussion increased, particularly among low-SES families. In low-SES households, parents' election knowledge increased significantly .

Other Information: None.

Program: Learn and Serve America

Population Served:
Size: Not provided
Age: Grades 6 – 12
Other Characteristics: 17 middle school and high school sites across the country

Program Components:*

Component	Provided by	Duration	Description
Students participate in community service activity to achieve their goals		4 – 5 hours per week	Service was provided at local schools and community agencies
Organized group discussion			Following service activities, students would come together in groups and discuss them
Academic curriculum linked to service			Students wrote papers and gave presentations on their service projects in English class

* The Learn and Serve America evaluation covered a number of different service learning programs, each with unique aspects. The grid represents a compilation of some of the program characteristics.

Program Objectives/Goals:
To help young people develop as responsible citizens, improve their academic skills, and develop as individuals through involvement in meaningful service linked to structured learning activities.

Study:
Melchior, A. (1998). *National Evaluation of Learn and Serve America School and Community-Based Programs: Final Report*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Center for Human Resources.

Study Objectives and Measurements:
Objective:
To evaluate the effectiveness of established Learn and Serve America programs in promoting community service, responsible citizen development, and academic achievements in program participants.
Measurement instrument:
Participant surveys and data drawn from school records.

Evaluation:
Type: Quasi-experimental

Statistical techniques: Regression analysis

Population evaluated: Students and teachers participating in the program. Approximately 1,000 participants completed pre- and postprogram surveys; 760 participants and control group members were involved in a 1-year follow-up.

Outcome:
Participants showed significantly more acceptance of cultural diversity, greater service leadership (defined as the degree to which students feel they are aware of the needs in a community, are able to develop and implement a service project, and are committed to service now and later in life), and stronger "civic attitudes," a cumulative measure of service leadership, acceptance of diversity, and social responsibility.

Participants were 20% more likely than nonparticipants to have been involved in community service in the past 6 months and provided more than twice as many hours of support during that period. In the educational domain, participants were significantly more engaged in school and had better math grades than nonparticipants.

Among middle schoolers, participants were less likely to be arrested or to become pregnant or father a child than nonparticipants.

Other Information:
Most of the outcomes related to service learning were shared relatively equally across the wide demographic range of youths.

Program: PUBLIC WORKS MAPPING PROJECT

Population Served:
Size: Ongoing
Age: Grades 3 – 8
Other Characteristics: Students at St. Bernard's Elementary School in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Program Components:

Component	Provided by	Duration	Description
Issues assembly	School	1 year	Students discuss issues that will be the focus of the year's work
Teachers meet with students to define issues			
Create strategic plan			
Students participate in community service activity to achieve their goals		At least once a week	

Program Objectives/Goals:
To renew democracy and use service as a vehicle for reform of education. To instill in students, teachers, and the surrounding area the sense of community and interrelation.

Study:
Lews, J. (2000). *Public Work Mapping Project: Public Achievement at St. Bernard's School.* St. Paul, MN:Center for Democracy and Citizenship. Available online at http://www.publicwork.org/case/stbern.htm

Study Objectives and Measurements:
Objective:
To describe the apparent effects of the project on students, teachers, and the surrounding communities
Measurement instrument:
Naturalistic observation

Evaluation:
Type: Descriptive

Statistical techniques: n/a

Population evaluated: Students and teachers participating in the program

Outcome:
Students reported learning on a conceptual level about power—its meaning and its application in the real world. Students described learning about citizenship skills and how those related to concrete events in their own lives, how to operate in groups, and how to deal with some of the issues that may arise in group discussion. The work component seemed to be significant, as students reported that the tangible products of their efforts made the experience even more important. Teachers report that students in the program were willing to expand their roles in the classroom and to suggest different points of view in class discussion.

Other Information: None.

Program: QUANTUM OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

Population Served:
Size: 125 students in five sites
Age: 9th grade students
Other Characteristics: Students were entering 9th grade; all were highly disadvantaged

Program Components:

Component	Provided by	Duration	Description
Education-related activities (tutoring, computer-assisted instruction, homework assistance)	Adult counselors committed to 4 years	250 hours/year after school	Different settings: community agencies, public schools, homes, group activities
Development activities (acquiring life, family skills; planning for college and jobs)	Adult counselors committed to 4 years	250 hours/year after school	Different settings: community agencies, public schools, homes, group activities
Service activities (community service projects, helping with public events, holding regular jobs)	Adult counselors committed to 4 years	250 hours/year after school	Different settings: community agencies, public schools, homes, group activities
Hourly stipends and bonuses for completing each segment of the program			

Program Objectives/Goals:
To foster academic and social competencies.

Study:
Hahn, A. (1994). Extending the time of learning. In D.J. Besharov (Ed.), *America's Disconnected Youth: Toward a Preventative Strategy*, pp. 233-266. Washington, DC: CWLA Press and American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Study Objectives and Measurements:
Objective:
To test the ability of community-based organizations to foster the achievement of academic and social competencies among high school students from families receiving public assistance.
Measurement instrument:
Questionnaire, academic skill level test (Test of Adult Basic Education – Form 5 Level), functional skill level test (APL 40 Item Version Survey – CCP Tier Mastery Test). Questionnaire given in Fall 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992. Follow-up questionnaire given in Fall 1993. Academic and functional skill testing given in fall 1989 and spring 1993.

Evaluation:
Type: Experimental

Statistical techniques: Random assignment to program and control groups. Data analyzed using a chi-square test. Significance level = .10

Population evaluated: All students were randomly selected from a pool of exiting 8th grade students from families receiving some form of public assistance. There were 100 participants and 100 control group members at pretest, 88 participants and 82 control group members at follow-up. Random assignment at four sites before recruitment; 5-year longitudinal study from 9th grade to 1 year after high school.

Outcome:

Effects apparent after 2 years.

Education—By the end of 12th grade (program began in 9th grade), participants had higher academic skills and educational expectations than youth in the control group, and the percentage of participants receiving honors or awards was nearly three times as great as the proportion of youth in the control group.

Dropout—Program participants were less likely to drop out at the end of the program, more likely to graduate from high school (63% vs. 42%), and more likely to be attending 2-year or 4-year college (37% vs. 14%).

Health—Less likely to have children in the postprogram period (38% vs. 20%); no significant site-specific differences in likelihood of having children; knowledge of contraceptives.

Social and emotional—Increased involvement in community service, improved attitudes toward future, lower rates of social exclusion (less likely to be unemployed, lacking high school diploma, and not in school).

Other Information:

The program design, not the evaluation procedure, set the sample size. The small size can be attributed to the financial incentive aspect of the program, which required limiting the number of participants.

Program: TEEN OUTREACH

Population Served:

Size: In 1995 – 1996 year, offered at 45 schools in 13 states

Age: Grades 9 – 12

Other Characteristics: Students were roughly 20% Caucasian, 66% African American, and 10% Hispanic

Program Components:

Component	Provided by	Duration	Description
Volunteering	Students	At least 20 hours	Working in hospitals, tutoring
Classroom discussions about social issues and service	School	At least once a week for a year	
Class activities promoting program goals	School		
Training in coping skills			
Tutoring			
Techniques for shifting peer group norms			

Program Objectives/Goals:

To prevent teen pregnancy and academic failure. In addition, the program was designed to empower students, as they would be "help givers" rather than "help receivers."

Study:

Allen, J., Philliber, S., Herrling, S., & Kuperminc, G. (1997). Preventing teen pregnancy and academic failure: Experimental evaluation of a developmentally-based approach. *Child Development, 68,* 729-742.

Study Objectives and Measurements:

Objective:

To address concerns generated from earlier studies evaluating the effectiveness of Teen Outreach by improving upon their design. To examine the effectiveness of the program.

Measurement instrument:

Self-report questionnaires asking questions about behavior problems, including school failure, suspensions, and pregnancy.

Evaluation:

Type: Experimental (participant and control groups selected at random before program began) Teen Outreach condition; control condition; randomized pre-test)

Statistical techniques: Logistic regressions. Significance level used < .05.

Population evaluated: 695 students in grades 9 – 12 from schools nationwide

Impacts:

Significant decreases were found on measures of school failure, school suspension, and teen pregnancy among participants, compared to the control group.

Other Information:

Authors estimated the cost of the program for a class of 18 – 25 students for a full academic year to be between $500 – 700 per student.

Appendix B: Other Activities Offered by Civic Engagement Programs[6]

Program	Activity
Across Ages	School-based life skills curriculum Mentoring Parenting workshops
Community-Based Planning Project	Data collection and analysis skills
K-12 Service Learning in California	Teacher professional development School-based curriculum on importance of service activities
Kids Voting USA	N/A
Learn and Serve America	School-based discussions of service activities
Quantum Opportunities Program	Education activities Life skills training
Public Works Mapping Project	Interpersonal skills (public speaking, interviewing, etc.) Critical thinking strategies
Teen Outreach	Positive youth development skills training (e.g., decision making, life skills) Tutoring Techniques for shifting peer group perceptions

[6] The Appalachian Project is not listed here because the evaluation was a broadly descriptive account of a program aimed at adults.

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Appalachian Project

AP Hustedde, R. (1996). An evaluation of the national issues forum methodology for stimulating deliberation in rural Kentucky. *Journal of the Community Development Society, 27,* 197-210.

Across Ages

AA LoSciuto, L., Rajala, A., Townsend, T.N., & Taylor, A.S. (1996). An outcome evaluation of Across Ages: An intergenerational mentoring approach to drug prevention. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 11,* 116-129.

Community-Based Planning Project

CB Beane, J., Turner, J., Jones, D., & Lipka, R. (1981). Long-term effects of community service programs. *Curriculum Inquiry, 11,* 143-155.

K-12 Service Learning in California

K12 Weiler, D., LaGoy, A., Crane, E., & Rovner, A. (1998). *An Evaluation of K-12 Service Learning in California: Phase II Final Report.* Emeryville, CA: Research, Policy, Practice International.

Kids Voting USA

KV McDevitt, M., & Chaffee, S. (2000). Closing gaps in political communication and knowledge: Effects of a school intervention. *Communication Research, 27,* 259-292.

Learn and Serve America

LS Melchior, A. (1998). *National Evaluation of Learn and Serve America School and Community-Based Programs: Final Report.* Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Center for Human Resources.

Quantum Opportunities Program

QOP Hahn, A. (1994). Extending the time of learning. In D.J. Besharov (Ed.), *America's Disconnected Youth: Toward a Preventative Strategy,* pp. 233-266. Washington, DC: CWLA Press and American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Public Works Mapping Project

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